CLAIMS:

5   What is claimed is:

1.   A method of allowing a device to be shared among
      partitions of a logically partitioned system comprising
10   the steps of:

      determining whether a requesting partition has
      permission to use a device; and

15   automatically reassigning the device to the requesting
      partition if the requesting partition has permission to
      use the device.

2.   The method of Claim 1 wherein the device is reassigned
20   to the requesting partition only if the device is
      currently idle.

3.   The method of Claim 2 wherein if the device is not idle
      the requesting partition is notified that the device is
25   not idle.

4.   The method of Claim 2 wherein after the requesting
      partition has terminated using the device, it indicates
      so.

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5.   The method of Claim 4 wherein upon indication that the
      requesting device has terminated using the device, the

device is reassigned to the partition it was originally assigned.

6. A computer program product on a computer readable medium for allowing a device to be shared among partitions of a logically partitioned system comprising:

   code means for determining whether a requesting partition has permission to use a device; and

   code means for automatically reassigning the device to the requesting partition if the requesting partition has permission to use the device.

7. The computer program product of Claim 6 wherein the device is reassigned to the requesting partition only if the device is currently idle.

8. The computer program product of Claim 7 wherein if the device is not idle the requesting partition is notified that the device is not idle.

9. The computer program product of Claim 7 wherein after the requesting partition has terminated using the device, it indicates so.

10. The computer program product of Claim 9 wherein upon indication that the requesting device has terminated using the device, the device is reassigned to the partition it was originally assigned.

11. An apparatus for allowing a device to be shared among partitions of a logically partitioned system comprising:

5   means for determining whether a requesting partition has permission to use a device; and

           means for automatically reassigning the device to the requesting partition if the requesting partition has
10   permission to use the device.

12. The apparatus of Claim 11 wherein the device is reassigned to the requesting partition only if the device is currently idle.

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13. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein if the device is not idle the requesting partition is notified that the device is not idle.

20 14. The apparatus of Claim 12 wherein after the requesting partition has terminated using the device, it indicates so.

15. The apparatus of Claim 14 wherein upon indication that
25   the requesting device has terminated using the device, the device is reassigned to the partition it was originally assigned.

16. A computer system for allowing a device to be shared
30   among partitions of a logically partitioned system comprising:

at least one memory device for storing code data; and

at least one processor for processing the code data to determine whether a requesting partition has permission

5   to use a device and to automatically reassign the device to the requesting partition if the requesting partition has permission to use the device.

17.   The computer system of Claim 16 wherein the device is

10   reassigned to the requesting partition only if the device is currently idle.

18.   The computer system of Claim 17 wherein if the device is not idle the requesting partition is notified that

15   the device is not idle.

19.   The computer system of Claim 17 wherein after the requesting partition has terminated using the device, it indicates so.

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20.   The computer system of Claim 19 wherein upon indication that the requesting device has terminated using the device, the device is reassigned to the partition it was originally assigned.

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